The Builder.

No. CCCCX.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1850.

THE Basilica of St. Boniface, commenced at the private cost of King Louis, of Bavaria, in 1835, and well known to all who have since visited Munich, was consecrated on the 24th ult. In 1848 we gave some small illustrations of this building,* but its size and magnificence are such as to lead us to give a larger view of the interior, with a plan and elevation.† St. Boniface is built on the model of the church of St. Paul, at Rome, which was burnt fifteen years ago. The entrance front presents an arcade of nine arches supported by eight columns of limestone and the side walls. The building is constructed mainly of red brick. Three doors of large size (the centre one nearly 30 feet high) are adorned with emblematical carvings by Glink.

The interior, which has a length of 262 Bavarian feet,‡ and a width of 124 feet, is divided into five aisles by four ranges of columns, thirteen in each, and ends in a semi-circular absis for the altar. The centre and principal division is 78 Bavarian feet high: the height of the side aisles is 43 feet. The columns are of pale grey marble; the capitals and bases white: the roof is open, and the panels formed by the principals and the purlins are painted blue and powdered with gold stars. The wood work is of deep red, with gilding. The high altar is approached by a flight of twelve steps. Below the pavement, which is of mosaic work, are formed vaults for the burial of the brethren of the Benedictine convent, to which the Basilica is attached. The connection of the buildings is seen on the plan,§ behind the absis. There is also a small subterranean chapel, in which to celebrate the funeral service.

The interior of the church is profusely decorated with frescoes, by Mons. H. Hess and his pupils, who commenced them in 1846. On the semi-cupola of the absis is symbolically represented the Church triumphant, by the figure of the Saviour in a glory, surrounded by the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, &c. Lower down, are Saint, Benedict, Boniface, Willibald, and others, who recall the propagation of Christianity, especially in Bavaria. Around the outer arch is placed the following text from Revelations:—"Isti sunt qui venerunt ex magna tribulatione, et laverunt stolas suas in sanguine Agni." Above are the lamb and the four Evangelists, painted on a gold ground. The lower part of the walls of the nave present twelve large frescoes and ten smaller ones, representing scenes drawn from the life of St. Boniface, the first apostle of the Germans. The series of large pictures commences with "The father of Boniface, saved from a severe illness by the prayers of his son, confides him to the care of the Benedictines," and ends with the deposition of the body of Boniface in the church of Foulda. The smaller pictures represent various episodes, which serve to connect the larger series.

Mons. Ziebland is the architect by whom this magnificent church for the Roman Catholic religion has been erected, and it is worthy of note, as an evidence of the king's impartiality, that Mons. Ziebland is a Protestant.

* Vol. VI. p. 547. † See page 594.

‡ The Bavarian foot is = 0·967 English foot.

§ For this plan we are indebted to Mons. Kreuter.

GOSSIP ABOUT PARIS.

THE Count de Nieuwerkerque, Director-General of the Museums, has commenced a series of "receptions" at the Louvre (on Friday evenings), which have given much satisfaction to the artistical and literary world in Paris. It appears, by the way, that the walls of the grand gallery of the Louvre were settling outwards towards the quay, and that it has been necessary to shore them up and examine the foundation. All the works rendered necessary in order to prevent any further settling having been completed, the shores have just been removed.

The works inside the square saloon are making progress. The walls have been covered with sheets of lead, to prevent the passage of damp. The architectural decorations will be very rich.

A series of paintings in the chapel of St. Paul, in the church of St. Sulpice, Paris, commenced several years ago by M. Drolling, of the French Institute, are now completed, and have obtained for the painter much praise.

Some stained glass recently executed for the Church of St. Lawrence, by M. Auguste Galimard, is also highly praised; but from what we hear, it would be less so in England. However, we shall be able to judge of the designs without going to Paris, for M. Galimard intends sending the cartoons to the Exhibition in 1851: they will occupy about 1,300 square feet! M. Felix Pigeory, architect, co-operated with him in these.

M. Pigeory lately visited Constantinople, and, through the French ambassador there, presented to the Sultan, Abdul Medjid, a copy of his work, *Les Monuments de Paris*. We learn from the *Revue des Beaux Arts*, of which M. Pigeory is editor, that the Sultan, in evidence of his satisfaction, has forwarded to the author a magnificent ring, set with brilliants.

The great portal of the Cathedral church of Paris, Notre Dame, is being adorned again with the statues of the twelve apostles, such as filled its niches before the first revolution. The figures are of stone, of large size, and have been executed in the *atelier* which has been formed in connection with the cathedral, by the two architects to whom the restoration of the building is entrusted.

CONDITION OF WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

ANOTHER year has nearly passed, and this crazy old structure still remains an eyesore, and, what is even worse, a hindrance to the traffic of our noble river. A Bill was passed last year for the construction of a temporary bridge, which it was calculated would occupy fifteen to eighteen months building. No step has yet been taken, and therefore it is evident that two winters must elapse before another thoroughfare can be obtained. What is most to be dreaded, perhaps, is a severe frost; it is quite true, by the removal of London Bridge, there is not much to fear below Westminster Bridge, but, inasmuch as that bridge is for the most part blocked up, there is every thing to fear from an accumulation of ice above; and it is also in evidence that in such an event the greatest mischief is to be apprehended. One would almost imagine it was purposely left to be swept away by the current, and thus save all trouble in the matter. By Mr. Barry's evidence before the last committee, he seems desirous of its being rebuilt on its present site, provided three conditions can be complied with, viz., width of 100 feet, a height of 18 feet for water-way, and the bridge to be perfectly level;—but he adds, if these conditions cannot be complied with, its removal farther north is indispensable. Now it seems pretty evident these conditions cannot be complied with: the Navigation Committee require a headway of 25 feet. The increased width would also be objectionable, as, if adopted, the promenade of the bridge would be brought so close to the Speaker's residence, and at so low a level that the comfort and privacy of a dwelling would be totally destroyed; therefore, following Mr. Barry's reasoning, it would seem that the bridge must be built further north. There was a recommendation in our paper some time since, that it should be carried across by Whitehall wharf, in Cannon-row, that is, to the south of Richmond Terrace; and it was further suggested, by widening Charles-street, and the removal of two or three houses in Duke-street, that an excellent thoroughfare would be obtained to St. James's Park, and thus to the district of Belgravia: by this plan Great George-street and Parliament-square would be relieved of an immense traffic, and the immediate approaches to the Houses of Parliament rendered more free from the danger attending the constant clash of carriages in that vicinity. But whether this plan be adopted or not, it surely is high time something was determined on: it is not just to keep the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in the state of uncertainty they have endured for the last three or four years. The witnesses examined before the several committees are men of the highest professional attainments, and surely it is little less than a mockery and a waste of valuable time to get together such evidence and treat it as though it were undeserving consideration. In the face of such evidence to pass a Bill entailing an outlay of 20,000*l.* for a temporary bridge is, to say the least, most extraordinary.

A HISTORICAL ESSAY ON TASTE.*

IN approaching a subject so varied and extensive as the Origin and Progress of Taste in Art, now principally in Architecture, it would not, I think, be unbecoming to request indulgence for the errors which may probably be made by one who does not belong to the profession, but who, nevertheless, perceiving in architecture a great and beautiful art, is desirous of devoting attention to it, for the sake of improving, by its means, his own knowledge and understanding of the principles of art. These—in nearly all the occupations of the muses—these fundamental principles are, in all arts, nearly or precisely similar. It is from the right comprehension of them, to anticipate, that taste, as we understand it now, may be said mainly to arise. In architecture, in poetry, in painting, in sculpture, it is alike necessary to observe those axioms of construction, execution, and adornment which have been declared by common concurrence to be inviolable, and without observance of which it is impossible to produce a complete work. I say that unity of conception, regard of general effect, justness of proportion, constructive solidity, and the like, are indispensably necessary to the creation of anything which, by the air of nature it shall wear, shall communicate a just idea to the mind, answer the imagination in our presence, or haunt the memory in our absence, with the shape, the colour, the sense, or sound of beauty, or with all of them combined. To speak generally, the violation of any of the primary principles would show an incompleteness or absence of taste. If we consider the subject more closely, taste is the result of a discriminative power of the intellect, which decides, in several or more objects, and consequently ideas of them, on that which most perfectly answers to her idea of, for instance, beauty,—the effect of certain constituent causes, such as proportion, harmony, &c., to her idea of, for instance, grandeur resulting from size, height, and the like,—an idea, I think, in some degree natural to man; if so, doubtless implanted by the Creator, and showing that the print of the Divine hand is left as well in the mind of man, as in all that it moulded, and it moulded all. It is probable, however, that the idea exists naturally in a very slight degree—the mind improving it to an observable point by its own almost unconscious observance of nature. Some wholly reject the notion of any innate ideas; the learned are divided on the point; the definition, too, of abstract notions is at all times difficult.

To resume. According to the experience of the mind by observation, arising from the multiplicity of objects observed and compared, will the power of justly discriminating be developed, always provided that the principles of art, *which are natural*, be allowed to guide; and the understanding so educated will ac-

* Read at meeting of the Architectural Association, Friday evening, Nov. 15.

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